



## **Irish Academy of Arms**

# **Bronze Blade Examination in Foil**

### **Conditions and Questions for the Bronze Blade**

The examination takes place in the candidate's Salle or club and is conducted by a member of the Irish Academy of Arms. It is split into two parts, each marked out of 50, with a mark of less than 25 in either section failing the examination.

#### **Part One - Theory**

Each candidate will be asked three questions and will have up to five minutes to answer them.

If the candidate does not reply to two of the questions satisfactorily or get fewer than 25 marks, s/he will be eliminated and will not be allowed to participate in the second section.

#### **Part Two - Practical**

The candidate will take a lesson.

This lesson will be based on the first (theory) part of the examination and will require the candidate to put the theory into practice, on the Assessor's command.

The exercises will consist of the following: straight thrust; disengagement, cut-over, counter-disengagement and all the compound attacks following from them, with the relevant parries (direct, circular, semi-circular), ripostes (simple and compound) and counter-ripostes (simple only).

The lesson will begin very slowly and the exercises will be executed in both high and low lines as appropriate.

Any candidate who does not know how to do the exercises or who makes a major error will be eliminated.

#### **The Guard**

Q What is the guard?

A The guard is the only position which allows the fencer to be prepared either to attack or defend.

### **The Engagement**

Q What is the Engagement

A it is where the two blades are in contact.

Q How many engagements are there?

A As many as there are fencing positions.

Q What is meant by change of engagement?

A It is to take up an engagement in a line other than that in which you were previously engaged.

Q How would you describe a “double engagement”?

A It is one change of engagement following immediately on another.

Q What is “absence of blade”?

A It is where the two blades are not in contact.

### **The Measure**

Q What is the measure?

A It is the longest distance at which a fencer can hit his/her opponent while lunging.

### **Movement**

Q What actions do you use to move on the piste?

A The step forward, the step back, the bounce (forwards or backwards), the lunge, the flèche, the balestra.

### **The Valid Target**

Q What is the valid target in foil?

A The target at foil excludes the limbs and the head. It is confined to the bib of the mask, the trunk, the upper limit being the collar up to 6 cm above the prominences of the collar bones; at the sides to the seams of the sleeves, which should cross the head of the humerus; and the lower limit following a horizontal line across the back joining the tops of the hip bones, thence by straight lines to the junction of the lines of the groin.

### **Ways of Making a Valid Hit**

Q How do you make a valid hit?

A All hits made with the point, with at least 500g pressure, are counted as good. [Non-valid (off-target) hits are registered but do not score. They negate any subsequent hits. When both competitors are hit the referee judges the priority of the hit (i.e. who was the attacker) and reads the fencing phrase to award the touch.]

### **The Attack**

Q What is an attack?

A A **simple attack**, direct or indirect, is correctly executed when the straightening of the arm, the point threatening the valid target, precedes the initiation of the lunge or the flèche.

A **compound attack** is correctly executed when the arm is straightened in the presentation of the first feint, with the point threatening the valid target, and the arm is not bent during the successive actions of the attack and the initiation of the lunge or the flèche..

Q What is *the* attack?

A It is, in a particular fencing phrase, *the first straightening arm*, whether or not preceded by movements of the point, followed by a lunge, balestra or flèche.

Q How many types of attack are there?

A 2, the simple attack and the compound attack.

### **The Simple Attack**

Q How many simple attacks are there? Name them.

A There are 4: the straight thrust; the disengagement; the cut-over and the counter-disengagement.

Q What is the straight thrust?

A It is the straightening of the arm in a line left open by an opponent, followed by a lunge or fleche.

Q What is the disengagement?

A In the high line, it is the straightening of the arm while passing the point *under* the blade of your opponent, followed by a lunge or flèche.

Q What is the cut-over?

A The cut-over has the same result as the disengagement, i.e. the passing of the point to the other side of the opponent's blade. You do it by passing *over* your opponent's blade, straightening your arm and then lunging or flèching.

Q What is the counter-disengagement?

A It is the action used on your opponent's change of engagement (qv), the point avoids the opponent's action, passing under the opponent's blade (in a direction opposite to a disengagement in the same line), the arm is straightened and a lunge or flèche follows.

### **The Compound Attack**

Q What is the compound attack?

A It is the simple attack, preceded by one or several feints and, of course, followed by a lunge or flèche.

Q How many compound attacks are there?

A Their number is as the sands of the desert.

### **The Feint**

Q What is the feint?

A Generally, it is the movement of the blade to draw an opponent into one line, making him/her uncover another.

### **The Parry**

Q What is a parry?

A It is the action of defending yourself from an attack by deflecting your opponent's blade with your weapon.

Q What is *the* parry?

A It is deflecting *the attack* (q.v.) With your weapon.

Q How many kinds of parry are there?

A There are three: direct or lateral parry; circular or counter parry and the semi-circular parry.

Q How do you parry?

A What ever kind of parry, it is done in two ways: **with a beat**, i.e. with a crisp beat  
**Or** **with opposition**, i.e. keeping in contact with the opponent's blade, without forcing.

Q How many parries are there?

A As many as there are positions (engagements), i.e. 9.

Q What are the parries most commonly used in foil?

A Quarte, sixte, septime and octave.

Q What is a circular parry?

A It is a parry which attempts to find the opposing blade in the line in which it is presented, to gather it and take it into the opposite line, with the point describing a circle.

Q How many circular parries are there?

A As many as there are positions, i.e. 9.

### **The Riposte**

Q What is the riposte?

A It is the offensive action against an opponent, with or without a lunge or fleche, *after having parried* the opponent's attack.

Q How would you describe a direct and an indirect riposte?

A A direct riposte is one which is given in the same line as the parry.  
An indirect riposte is given in a line different from the parry.

Q When is a riposte compound (composed)?

A When it is preceded by one or more feints.

Q What is a broken-time riposte?

A One which does not follow immediately on the parry.

Q What simple ripostes do you know?

A There are 3: riposte by Straight thrust  
riposte by disengagement  
riposte by cut-over

Q Give examples of compound ripostes.

A Riposte by: one-two; cut-over-disengage; high-low; etc

### **The Counter-Riposte**

Q What is the counter-riposte?

A It is the riposte made after having parried a riposte from your opponent.

Q Can you do several counter-ripostes? How many?

A Yes. Innumerable.

Q Who does the first counter-riposte?

A The attacker.

Q Can the counter-riposte be simple or compound?

A Yes, just like a riposte - simple or compound.